Arboretum News

Summer 1999

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The Next 50 Years of Plants and People - California Arboretum Foundation 1998-2048

Baldwin Lake: Its Origins and History

Sandy Snider

Cienega, lagoon, sag pond or lake? All four terms have been used over the years in reference to the four-acre natural body of water in the heart of the Arboretum's Historical Section. Baldwin Lake is what we call it today, and certainly the term "lake" predominates in the literature of the past one hundred years.

Three thousand years ago, Native American villages were situated as nature dictated, along the sheltered coast, next to rivers and streams and near natural lakes. Village names often reflected their native settings: Hukngna (El Monte) was "in the weeping willow trees," Kuruvungna (Santa Monica) denoted "a place where we are in the sun," Topanga was "a place where mountains run out into the sea." Similarly, the homesite of the earliest inhabitants of today's Arboretum was known as Aleupkigna or "the place of many waters."

A geological note helps explain the genesis of "the place of many waters." The San Gabriel Valley is bisected by the Raymond Hill Fault, the flexure of which serves as a subterranean dam in the area. An abundance of surface and artesian water, steep scarps, fault ridges, depressions and springs are fault-related features that once characterized much of the west Valley. The Arboretum's Tallac Knoll is a lens-shaped hill squeezed by pressure along the faults that circumscribe it. The adjacent natural lake is another fault-related feature. Known technically as a sag pond, the Arboretum lake is in fact a fault depression, the opposite of Tallac Knoll on its west.

With the arrival of the Spanish in California some two hundred years ago, the residents of Aleupkigna became known as the Gabrielino (in reference to the mission responsible for their conversion), and the land upon which they had lived before removal to the Mission became Rancho Santa Anita, an agricultural outpost of Mission San Gabriel.

Hugo Reid, a Scotsman with Mexican citizenship, married to a Gabrielino woman, became the first private owner of Rancho Santa Anita and in 1840 constructed his adobe house next to the lake. Reid's hand-drawn map or *diseño* of his rancho indicates a *cienega*, a spring or swamp, at the lake site and, given the vagaries of nature, this could well have been an accurate description at the time.

When Elias Jackson "Lucky" Baldwin purchased Rancho Santa Anita in 1875, he acquired not only the natural lakes and cienegas on the property, but water rights in both Big and Little Santa Anita Canyons just north of his homesite. The Baldwin Ranch was situated on a 2,000 acre artesian belt, a benefit of its location atop the Raymond Hill Fault. Sixty percent of Baldwin Ranch irrigation waters came from artesian sources, the remaining 40 percent from canyon waters. Baldwin Lake, which served as a holding reservoir for ranch irrigation projects, was dredged and deepened, perhaps 12-15 feet, by owner Baldwin in the late 1880s, and a retaining wall, capped by granite boulders, was constructed around the lake edge.

Baldwin Lake was used in 1939 to film Road to Singapore *with Bob Hope, Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour. This structure was also used in the movies* Safari *and* Typhoon *that same year.*

"Baldwin's Belvedere," today known as the Queen Anne Cottage, was built in 1885 on a peninsula jutting out into the horseshoe-shaped lake; the springs that feed the lake are located in both the north and south inlets. In front of the Cottage still

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An Informal Salute and Send-off to John Provine

On April 20, the Board of Trustees welcomed former trustees, friends and garden directors who gathered to salute John Provine, Superintendent of The Arboretum, prior to his April retirement. John "adjourned" a 36-year career at The Arboretum. To honor John's dedication and leadership, the CAF is sponsoring an endowed scholarship in his name at his alma mater, Cal Poly Pomona, College of Agriculture, Department of Horticulture/ Plant & Soil Sciences for a student interested in Public Gardens. Every dollar raised will be matched through a Kellogg Foundation grant to Cal Poly. ❧

Marilyn Brumder, Peg Stewart and John Provine

From the CEO

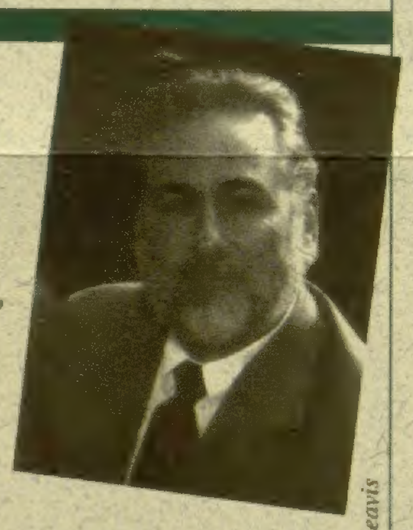

Photo: Clyde Reavis

As I sit here in my office looking out onto the evolving *Sunset* Demonstration Gardens, it is difficult to imagine that I have been the Chief Executive Officer of The Arboretum for such a short time. It certainly is an exciting period and full of opportunity for reflection.

I am enjoying meeting so many new people, from Foundation trustees and Parks and Recreation administrators to our many Arboretum visitors and members of the community at large. I have encountered much enthusiasm and a willingness to help.

In the same spirit of cooperation which the new Joint Management agreement codifies, we are creating a unified organization comprised of employees of both the County and the Foundation. We have moved Foundation staff into the Administration building and are merging telephone and computer systems and even letterheads.

We are assessing the Arboretum's infrastructure for necessary repairs and improvements including an update to the irrigation system, telephone network, heating and air conditioning, and the electrical needs to support event and pathway lighting for evening activities. Our educational programming is also being reviewed and expanded. This summer we are partnering with the Huntington Botanical Gardens on an orchid program and will continue looking for similar collaborations. Even the Los Angeles Garden Show is under review and, as you may already know, will not be held this Fall. We are using the time instead to regroup, plan, and determine the best future direction to pursue.

As you can envision, the future of The Arboretum is exciting. We will be working with marketing and professional development groups as well as graphic and landscape designers and architects to help us realize our vision. We have much to accomplish, with only our own creativity being the limiting factor for success. ❧

Peter C. Atkins

Baldwin Lake

Continued from page 1

stands a Baldwin era artesian well described in a *Pacific Rural Press* article of May 9, 1885, as "throwing water six feet above the ground in a large volume," with "cemented, open raceways made for the overflow to pass off in little rivulets all around the house." Julian Fisher, who worked on the ranch as a child with his father, remembered furnishing drinking fountains for ranch visitors by "taking my shovel, digging a hole, sticking a pipe in the ground and setting out a stack of cups for folks to take a drink from free flowing water." Lucky Baldwin supplied residents of the city of Arcadia with a combination of canyon and artesian water of such quality that a *Los Angeles Herald* reporter commented, "Why, if this God-given fluid were piped to Los Angeles and distributed to the city, the saloons would lose half their customers, and water drinking would become fashionable." (Mar. 30, 1887)

The idea of drinking Baldwin Lake water today gives pause for thought; indeed, even wading in its increasingly shallow depths is a challenge for the faint of heart. Recent toxicological tests have proven negative, however, and since 1936 movie and television locations have embraced Baldwin Lake as a stand-in for swamps, lakes, rivers and even South Pacific lagoons. In early Arboretum days the lake was designated LASCA (Los Angeles State and County Arboretum) Lagoon, perhaps a reference to its film location possibilities, perhaps a corruption of the Spanish work for lake.

Johnny Weissmuller swam in LASCA Lagoon/Baldwin Lake for three decades as Tarzan and later Jungle Jim. A local news story reported that he, in fact, set an unrecorded Olympic swim record when a cage of crocodiles was accidentally opened during filming (Weissmuller beat the crocs to the lake shore). Bob Hope, Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour took up a month-long watery Baldwin Lake residence in homes on

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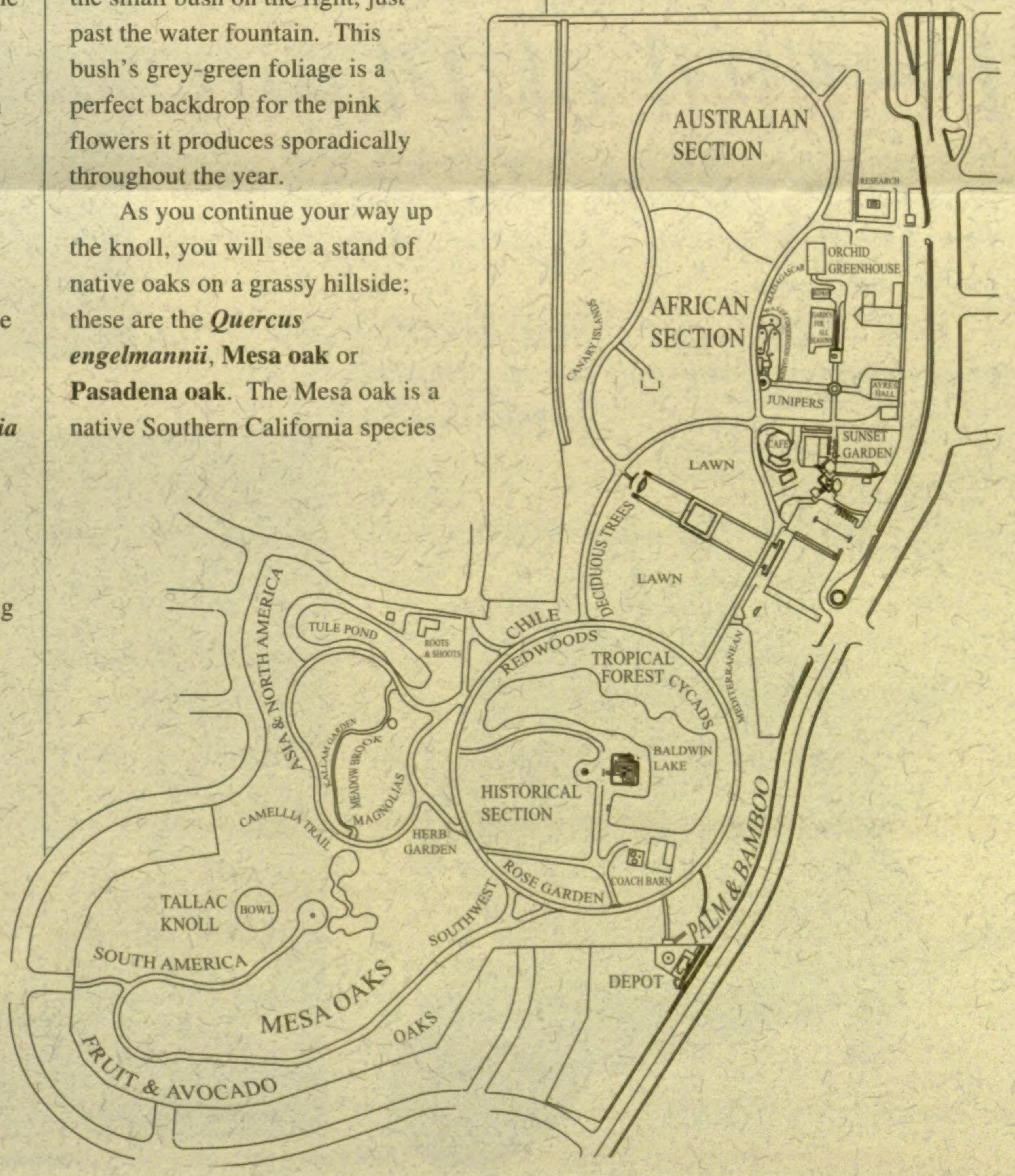
Along Arboretum Paths

Along Arboretum Paths will take you to a different part of the Garden each issue.

To continue Along Arboretum Paths ... After you pass the **Coast redwoods** and begin your way up the hill, to the right you will see our small collection of plants native to the Southwest and northern Mexico. These plants have evolved a number of strategies to control water loss, allowing them to exist in harsh desert environments. Among the plants to note are the odd trees nearest the road on the right, ***Beaucarnea stricta***, the **Elephant foot tree** or **Pony tail palm**; the common names are predicated on which end of the tree you happen to be looking at. Just past the ***Beaucarnea*** is another strange tree supported by wire lines. This is ***Idria columnaris***, the **Boojum** tree, which is native to the Baja California Peninsula. In order to control its water loss, the Boojum will remain leafless most of the year. The small leaves it produces during the wet season quickly turn into spines which protect this tree's water-storing tissues from predation. Seemingly cactus-like, the Boojum is actually a member of the Fouquieria family, as is the Ocotillo native to our southern deserts. "Forests" of these trees exist in Baja California, where they can grow to 70 feet. ***Ceanothus***, **California lilac**, is the dark-green-leafed bush above the water fountain. A number of these shrubs of the Buckthorn family are native to the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains where they bloom in the spring in colors ranging from dark blue to white. Another native of the American Southwest and northern Mexico is ***Leucophyllum frutescens***, **Texas ranger**, the small bush on the right, just past the water fountain. This bush's grey-green foliage is a perfect backdrop for the pink flowers it produces sporadically throughout the year.

As you continue your way up the knoll, you will see a stand of native oaks on a grassy hillside; these are the ***Quercus engelmannii***, **Mesa oak** or **Pasadena oak**. The Mesa oak is a native Southern California species which has a very limited range from northern Baja California to, roughly, the foothill regions of the San Gabriel Mountains. 90% of the remaining stands are in San Diego County. These trees are victims, not only of the urbanization of the San Gabriel Valley, but also of well-intentioned gardeners. People often water these trees during the summer months, causing a combination of moisture and heat which encourages a root fungus (*Armillaria mellea*, Oak root fungus) that kills them. Ours is one of the last pure stands of these oaks in the San Gabriel Valley, 85% of the grove being ***Q. engelmannii.***

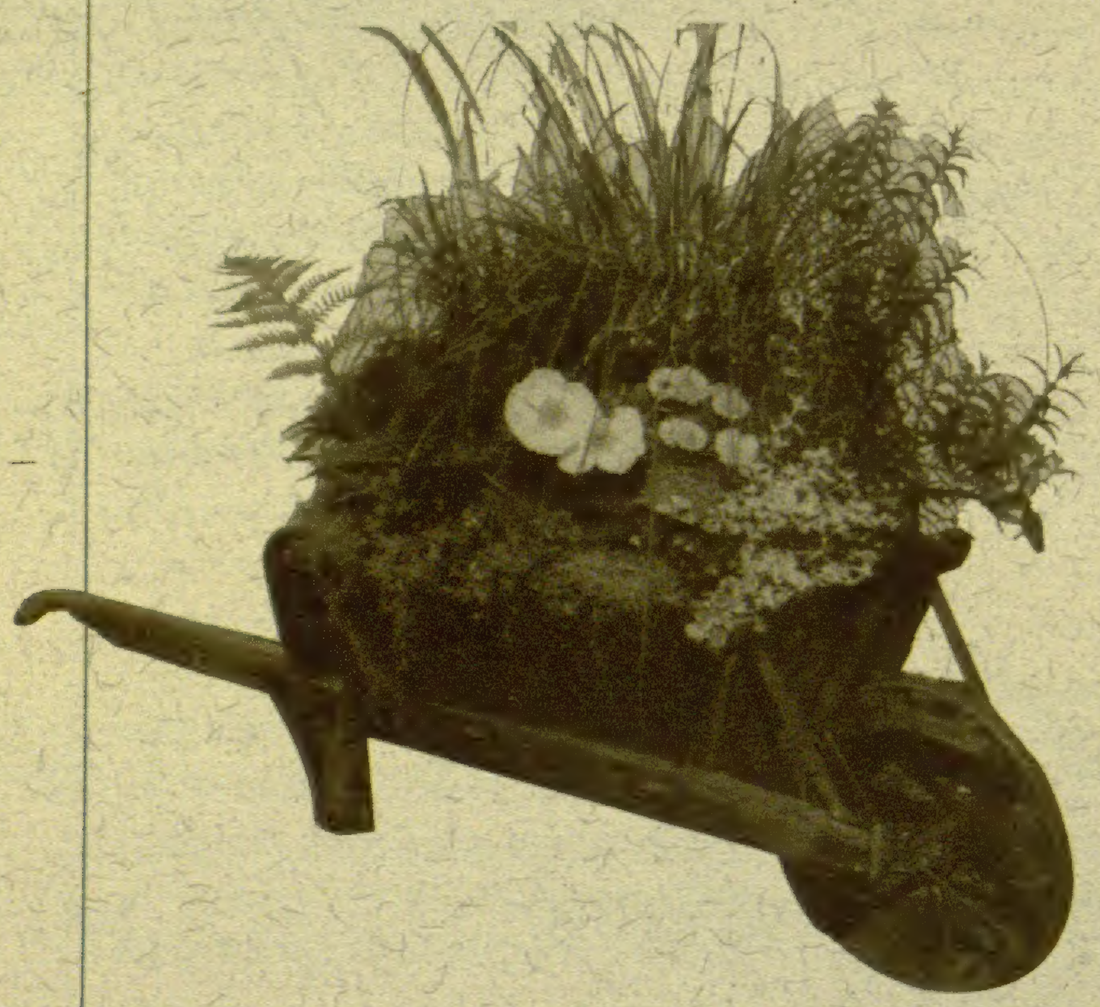
Compiled by Nelson Holmes



BALDWIN BONANZA XXIX
Festival of Plants

Another successful Baldwin Bonanza Auction Party and Plant Sale Weekend...truly a FUNdraiser and friendraiser for The Arboretum.

Good attendence, eager shoppers, beautiful setting, great volunteers, terrific staff, and excellent vibes.



Thank you!

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Week's Roses

What's Blooming at The Arboretum?

The following is representative of the many species and varieties in bloom over the next few months at The Arboretum:

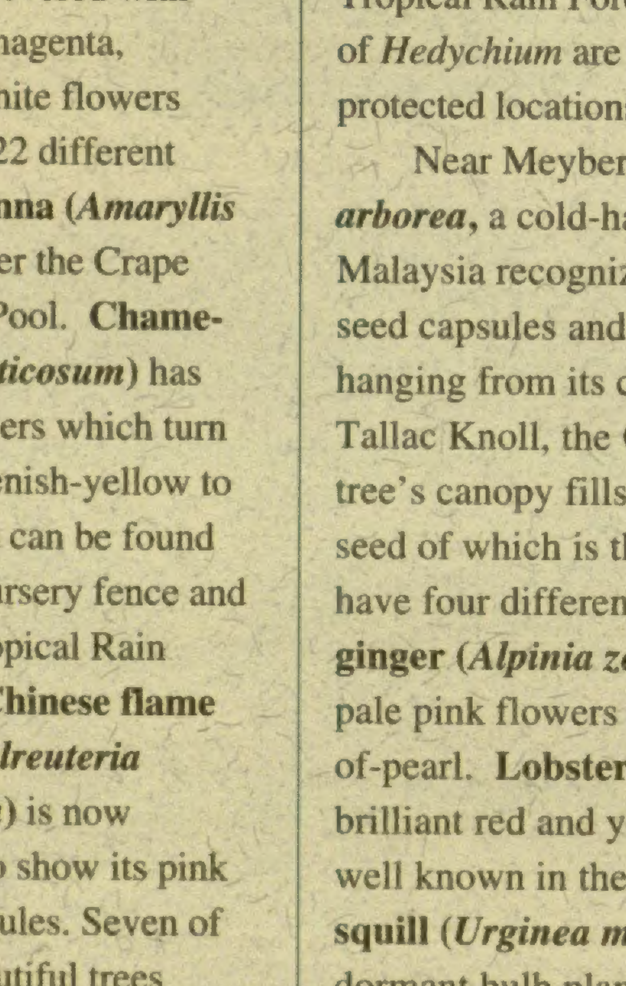
JUNE

About now many specimens of the **Gold medallion tree (*Cassia leptophylla*)** burst into a bright-gold cacophony of color. This Arboretum introduction is native to Brazil. Still in bloom are Daylilies, Lily-of-the-Nile, *Hibiscus*, *Erythrina*, *Cotinus coggygria* and *Melaleuca*.

At the Aquatic Gardens on top of Tallac Knoll, you may see **Water lilies *(Nymphaea)*** in the pools. Many Hibiscus are in full bloom now. We have 112 specimens representing 9 species and many different varieties.

In the Australian Section the **Primrose tree (*Lagunaria patersonii*)** displays hibiscus-like flowers. It earns another common name, Cowitch, because of the irritating hairs found in its capsules. The **Lacebark (*Brachychiton discolor*)** has velvety, pink, bell-shaped flowers that litter the ground under the tree. Most of the nine specimens here at The Arboretum are in this section.. Daintily blue-flowered ***Dianella*,** a woodland herbaceous perennial, follows its flowers with blue berries. We have five species here. Fragrant **Sweetshade (*Hymenosporum flavum*)** fills the air with its intoxicating fragrance. With nine trees, it can get quite intense. ***Cassia brewsteri*** has a spreading crown of rusty gold flowers. **Red flowering gum (*Eucalyptus ficifolia*)** has coral pink flowers.

Notice the fragrant, long-tubed flowers on ***Gardenia thunbergia*** in the African Section. **Goldenrain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*)** is showing its yellow flower clusters in the Asiatic Section. Nearby, fragrant, pale pink, powder-puff-flowered **Mimosa** trees **(*Albizia julibrissin*)** are blooming. We have four species of *Albizia* at The Arboretum.



Lobster claw (*Heliconia*)

LATE JULY, AUGUST

Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia*), a small, multi-trunked tree covered with large clusters of crimson, magenta, lavender, bright pink, or white flowers according to which of our 22 different varieties you see. **Belladonna (*Amaryllis belladonna*)** is located under the Crape myrtles west of the Bauer Pool. **Chameleon vine (*Combretum fruticosum*)** has spectacular brush-like flowers which turn from greenish-yellow to orange. It can be found on the Nursery fence and in the Tropical Rain Forest. **Chinese flame tree (*Koelreuteria bipinnata*)** is now starting to show its pink seed capsules. Seven of these beautiful trees grace The Arboretum, one located near the Peacock Cafe. The Gold Medallion trees have been blooming since mid-June, and are excellent trees for long lasting mid-summer color. We have seven of these trees, many on Tallac Knoll. **Lily-of-the-Nile (*Agapanthus*)** Arboretum introductions include 'Queen Anne' and 'Rhapsody'. ***Nasturtium bauhinia* (*Bauhinia punctata*)** is a tropical and subtropical African relative of the Orchid tree.

On the north edge of Baldwin Lake **Kahili ginger (*Hedychium gardneranum*)** abounds in and around the Tropical Rain Forest. Seven other species of *Hedychium* are located in various protected locations around The Arboretum.

Near Meyberg Waterfall is ***Harpullia arborea*,** a cold-hardy native of India and Malaysia recognized by its bright orange seed capsules and shiny jet-black seeds hanging from its canopy. Elsewhere on Tallac Knoll, the **Coffee (*Coffea arabica*)** tree's canopy fills with dark red fruit, the seed of which is the coffee "bean". We have four different varieties here. **Shell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*)** has glossy, pale pink flowers that shine like mother-of-pearl. **Lobster claw (*Heliconia*)** has brilliant red and yellow flowers that are well known in the cut flower trade. **Sea squill (*Urginea maritima*)** is a summer dormant bulb plant that is native to the Canary Islands. It comes into bloom with 3-4 foot spikes of white flowers just before fall. Look for it in the African Section. ❧

Compiled by Frank McDonough

Water lilies *(Nymphaea)*

Tour and Taste Thursdays

Offered for the sixth summer straight, the popular Tour and Taste Thursdays bring an interesting program and Arboretum twilight together for a special and fun evening complete with Peacock Terrace supping. Plan to attend often, and be certain to make your reservations early because the series sold out rapidly last summer.

July 8 - Tram and Travelogue

July 22 - Murder Mystery in the Garden, a Brother Cadfael reenactment

August 5 - Victorian Garden Plantings at the Queen Anne Cottage

August 19 - Scratch and Sniff: A Sensory Tour of the Herb Garden

September 9 - Tram and Travelogue

Plant Quiz

1. What do *Tabebuia chrysotricha*, *Helichrysum* and *Chrysanthemum* have in common?

2. There was a comic strip called "_____ the Magician." John Donne wrote, "Go, and catch a falling star, Get with child a _____ root." Name the plant.

3. Roses can be found elsewhere than in gardens. Can you think of a title of a ballet, an opera and a Strauss waltz that features roses?

4. Mulan is the Chinese name for what flower?

5. Coriander seed comes from which herb commonly used in Mexican cooking?

Answers: 1. They all have yellow flowers. *Chrysos* means golden. 2. Mandrake 3. *Le Spectre de la rose, Der Rosenkavalier* and "Roses from the South" 4. Magnolia 5. Cilantro

Baldwin Lake

Continued from page 2

stilts for the filming of *Road to Singapore* in 1939, the same year the Douglas Fairbanks, Jr./Madeleine Carroll Film *Safari* managed to sink a paddlewheel boat in the same lake. Undaunted, television's original *Fantasy Island* lowered a pontoon plane by helicopter onto Baldwin Lake and propelled it across the water to disembark visitors to Mr. Roark's island paradise. For Alex Haley's *Roots II*, Baldwin Lake became Kunta Kinte's river home in Africa; for the movie *Anaconda* it was the Amazon of Brazil.

For today's visitors, Baldwin Lake is a place to feed the ducks, to start a California History school field trip, to break out the oil paints or a camera. It remains a natural body of water with remnants of Baldwin's granite wall here and there. It is a tantalizing link to the past and a reminder that our natural resources are both fragile and precious. When the lake went dry in 1991, it was horrifying to see the rapid depletion of fish and water fowl. With the end of the drought a year later, the natural springs came bubbling back up, the lake was restocked with blue gill and migratory ducks returned. Baldwin Lake is the last of the Raymond Hill Fault water features to survive intact, with thanks to Lucky Baldwin's timely intervention, but it falls to this and succeeding generations to insure the life-giving waters for future visitors, both avian and human. ❧

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JUST IN TIME FOR SUMMER PLANTING ... all members of the Foundation receive a 10% discount at the following nurseries:

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1507 El Centro, South Pasadena

STEWART ORCHIDS
3838 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City
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California Philharmonic Orchestra Ticket Discounts for Members

Once again Foundation members are being treated to a special ticket purchase opportunity for this summer's California Philharmonic Orchestra concert series at The Arboretum. A 10% discount *off the face value* of an individual concert ticket at the time of purchase is being offered. To place your order please phone 626-844-6600 and be sure to mention that you are a Foundation member.

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